



SB 189 - Military Children in Education

SEA 189, was passed by the Indiana General Assembly during the 2016 session. It becomes effective July 1, 2016.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) is leading an effort to assess the academic achievement and educational outcomes of children of military families. IC 20-19-3-9.4 (b) was enacted in 2010 as an initiative to collect data on military children in Indiana in support of the DOD effort. SEA 189 has been enacted to improve confidentiality and consistency of the data.

The new legislation requires the IDOE to develop a state-wide standardized form to collect data and insure consistency across school districts. The link to the form is provided below.

The form has two main parts: children of military families and students enrolled in Adult High School who may be members of the military. The form is designed to be self-explanatory and clarify military terms such as “active-duty” which has several meanings depending on context.

In addition to better standardizing the data, SEA 189 addresses the confidentiality concerns of the families. Nowadays service members and their families are trained to minimize their military profile. Therefore many military families are cautious or may refuse to complete the form if they are unaware of its purpose and/or are not sure the information will be collected and held in a confidential manner.

IDOE is required to issue guidance to schools for collection of the data in a confidential manner. The link to the guidance for the collection of data of military children is provided below.

FAQs

1) When and how should the data be collected?

- a. This will be up to the local school corporations with some recommendations. The data must be collected by using the attached form. The form should be given to parents at the beginning of each school year or when the student is registered (K-12). Once the school corporation has received the forms back, the data should be reported to the Department.

2) When is a student considered “connected to a military family”?

- a. Generally, if a student is claimed as a dependent by a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; or if the student is of the same household of a service member; whether or not the student is a dependent. The service member and the student can be considered of the same household even though they are not related.

3) Who should complete the IDOE form?

- a. This form should only be completed by adults.



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- 4) **Are parents required to complete the form or answer questions concerning their military status?**
 - a. No. This data collection is voluntary but most military families will want to participate if they know it is a U.S. Department of Defense initiative carried out by states to help inform policy and programs decisions for this unique student population.
- 5) **Why is the confidentiality so important?**
 - a. Military families are proud of their service but service members are also trained to keep their military status at a low profile. Terrorist organizations are very vocal about their desire to target members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. Military members and their families are even more sensitive to this if they have been stationed overseas.
- 6) **Why are children of military families unique?**
 - a. There are several unique aspects to military family life that are a factor in education. The major factors include frequent moves; long separation periods lasting months or longer; the stress of a parent(s) in a combat situation.
- 7) **What if the family member just recently ended their service in the military?**
 - a. If the service member was discharged (active-duty, Reserve, or National Guard) anytime during the school year or in the last twelve (12) months, he or she should be asked to complete the form.
- 8) **What if the parent completing the form is not the service member and is not clear as to the other parent's or household member's military status?**
 - a. If they are not clear, have the parent complete the form the best they can.
- 9) **Is the data collected with the intent of creating an accountability sub-group?**
 - a. No. It is a "report-only", in the same manner as migrant and homeless children.
- 10) **What is the best way in order to handle the information in a confidential manner?**
 - a. The best way to handle the information in a confidential manner is to treat in the same manner as other FERPA protected student data, being careful how you ask parents and students if they are connected to a military family. Openly asking who is "military" or who is a "military child" may violate confidentiality.



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Confidential

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Military Children in Education

2016-17 School Year

Purpose: This questionnaire is the result of a Department of Defense (DOD) program supported by Indiana statute 20-19-3-9.4. Confidentially identifying military children and providing data on their attendance and educational outcomes, states can assist schools and districts by providing access to data to help inform policy and program decisions for this unique student population. In addition, DOD will benefit from this data in developing policy for military child education initiatives.

School Name: _____ Student's Grade Level: _____

Student's Full Legal Name: _____
Please print clearly

Please complete the questions that best describes your student's situation. It is possible to answer "yes" to both.

1. Is the above named student connected to an Active Duty military family: _____ Yes _____ No

Meaning a school-aged child, enrolled or in the process of enrolling in KG-12th grade, is claimed as a dependent by an Active Duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States; or the student and an Active Duty member(s) are of the same household whether or not the active duty member(s) claims the student as a dependent.

"Active Duty" means: full-time duty status in the active uniformed service of the United States.

2. Is the above named student connected to a Guard or Reserve military family: _____ Yes _____ No

Meaning a school-aged child, enrolled or in the process of enrolling in KG-12th grade, who is claimed as a dependent by a member of the National Guard or Reserve; or the student and National Guard or Reserve member(s) are of the same household whether or not the National Guard or Reserve member(s) claims the student as a dependent.

"National Guard or Reserve" means: members of the Reserve Component as defined in 10 U.S.C. Section 10101. Includes Army National Guard of US, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard of US, Air Force Reserve or Coast Guard Reserve.

ONLY For Students of an ADULT High School (IC 20-24-1-2.3)

Is the above named student an active member of the Armed Forces of the United States _____ Yes _____ No

OR

Is the above named student a member of the National Guard or Reserve _____ Yes _____ No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form shall be handled by schools in a confidential manner in accordance with IDOE Guidance (IC 20-19-3-9.4)

A green wavy line representing a hill spans the width of the header. Silhouettes of five people are walking along the crest of the hill from left to right. The first person is a small child, followed by two adults, and the last is a person in a graduation cap.

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Guide for Confidentially Handling Military Children in Education Information

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) is leading an effort to assess the academic achievement and educational outcomes of children of military families. IC 20-19-3-9.4 (b) was enacted in 2010 as an initiative to collect data on military children in Indiana in support of the DOD effort. SEA 189 was enacted in 2016 to improve confidentiality and consistency of the data.

Indiana law now requires schools to collect information concerning students of military families in a confidential manner. As with all student data, security is an important issue. A student's connection to the military has an extra safety concern. Military families are proud of their service but service members are also trained to keep their military status at a low profile. Terrorist organizations are very vocal about their desire to target members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. Military members and their families are even more sensitive to this if they have been stationed overseas.

Military families will not want to volunteer information unless it is clear to them that the information will be handled in a secure and private manner. The following should be followed when handling information concerning students connected to military families;

- This data is covered under FERPA and should be handled in the same manner as other FERPA protected student data.

- Explain the purpose of the data collection and that the information is kept confidential by state and federal law.

- Only have adult family members complete the form.

- Do not inquire whether or not a student is connected to a military family in a manner that can be heard or seen by others.

- Once the form is completed and the information is entered in a secure database held by the Department of Education, the hard copy form should be destroyed in a proper manner (shredding, etc.).

- Use the student information collected only for the purpose for which it was collected and do not distribute to anyone or any organization other than the IDOE.

- For school veteran ceremonies, do not use the information collected to send invitations to service members. Instead send out invitations school-wide and not just to the families who responded to the questionnaire form.

